

Message Text

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71

ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 ARA-16 EUR-25 ISO-00 CAB-09 CIAE-00 COME-00

DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 FAA-00 DOTE-00 SS-20

NSC-10 L-03 DRC-01 /107 W

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R 141530Z JAN 74

FM AMCONSUL PARAMARIBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1533

INFO AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRN, NS

SUBJECT: PAN AM SUSPENDS SERVICE TO PARAMARIBO

REF: STATE 243847

1. SUMMARY. THE SUSPENSION OF PAN AM FLIGHT SERVICE TO PARAMARIBO HAS CAUSED A STRONGLY NEGATIVE REACTION FROM THE MEDIA AND GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING A THREAT FROM ECONOMICS MINISTER BRUMA THAT UNLESS PAN AM REVERSED ITS SUSPENSION, THE LINE WILL LOSE ITS LANDING RIGHTS TO PARAMARIBO. END SUMMARY.

2. THE ANNOUNCEMENT THAT PAN AM SERVICE TO PARAMARIBO WOULD BE SUSPENDED EFFECTIVE JANUARY 7 HAS PROVOKED A BROAD AND UNFAVORABLE REACTION IN THIS SMALL COMMUNITY. EACH OF PARAMARIBO'S THREE DAILY NEWSPAPERS HAS GIVEN THE STORY PROMINENT FRONT PAGE COVERAGE COMPLETE WITH CRITICAL COMMENT ON THE EFFECT OF THE SUSPENSION ON SURINAM'S DEVELOPMENT AND ON THE FIRING OF PAN AM'S TWENTY-ODD SURINAM EMPLOYEES. WHILE OFFICIALS PRIVATELY ARE MORE CONCERNED ABOUT THE FORMER CONSIDERATION, THE AVERAGE SURINAMER FINDS IT EASIER TO EMPATHIZE WITH THE PLIGHT OF THE DISMISSED WORKERS - AND IS ALMOST INCREDULOUS THAT THEY ARE NOT COVERED BY SOME SORT OF PENSION PLAN. THIS WAS AMPLY PUBLICIZED BY THE EMOTIONAL APPEARANCE

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ON TELEVISION OF TOP RANKING SURINAM EMPLOYEE WHO EXPLAINED

THAT AFTER MORE THAN 30 YEARS SERVICE HE WOULD RECEIVE A FEW WEEKS TERMINATION PAY BAT NO PENSION.

3. ON JANUARY 4, J. JACOBSON, PAN AM'S MIAMI-BASED REGIONAL SUPERVISOR WHO WAS VISITING PARAMARIBO, WAS CALLED IN BY MINISTER OF ECONOMICS AFFAIRS EDDY BRUMA. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS WHICH WERE SUBSEQUENTLY CONFIRMED BY THE STATION MANAGER (THE CONSULATE DID NOT LEARN OF MR. JACOBSON'S PRESENCE IN PARAMARIBO UNTIL THE STORY APPEARED IN THE LOCAL PRESS SEVERAL DAYS LATER) BRUMA TOLD JACOBSON THAT UNLESS PAN AM REVERSED ITS DECISION TO SUSPEND SERVICE TO PARAOARIBO, IT WOULD FORFEIT ITS LANDING RIGHTS TO PARAMARIBO. BRUMA POINTED OUT THAT THERE WAS AS YET NO JET FUEL SHORTAGE IN PARAMARIBO NOR THE IMMEDIATE THREAT OF ONE AND STATED THE GOVERNMENT WOULD GUARANTEE CONTINUED FUEL SUPPLIES FOR PAN AM.

4. THE PAN AM QUESTION IS ONE MORE POPULAR ISSUE (TOGETHER WITH BREAD AND RICE PRICES) ON WHICH BRUMA HAS SEIZED TO BUILD HIS IMAGE. BRUMA'S THREAT TO CANCEL PAN AM'S LANDING RIGHTS MIGHT NOT BE IMPLEMENTABLE NOW, SINCE THESE RIGHTS ARE CONCEDED BY THE NETHERLANDS. HOWEVER, SURINAM MAY WELL BE INDEPENDENT WITHIN 3 - 4 YEARS AND WOULD THEN PRESUMABLY NOT BE BOUND BY AGREEMENTS MADE BY THE NETHERLANDS.
JOHNSTON

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